



## 20 Quick ideas for teaching and learning about space

Throughout history, people have wondered, imagined, and thought about space and what lies beyond.

A unit about space provides many opportunities for children to engage in thinking, discussion, and learning.

Below are a few suggestions to get the thinking started.

- ★ **Celebrate World Space Week** from 4 – 10 October each year.
- ★ **Cover** a large display board or wall with dark blue paper. (Each child could paint a piece of A3 paper to contribute to the background.) Add the children’s wonderings, questions, ideas, suggestions, pictures, and writing to the display.
- ★ **Ask** children what they wonder about space, and record their wonderings. Many of their wonderings will match those of philosophers and scientists throughout history; for example, “Yen wonders if people live in outer space. Jan wonders what Earth looks like from space. Margot wonders how long it would take to get to the sun.” This is not a time for answers. It is a time for questions. If children are writers, you could supply them with (star-shaped) sticky notes on which to write their wonderings, one per note. Display the wonderings.
- ★ **Record** what children want to know about space. This is also a time for questions, and not for answers. There will be time for answers later. It is important for children to know that their questions are both valid and valued; for example, “Marcos wants to know what happens to the stars during the day. Tejas wants to know where the sun goes at night.”
- ★ **Record** what children already know, or think they know, about space, space exploration, and the night sky.
- ★ **Encourage** children to imagine “What do you think it would be like to travel into space?” “What if you could touch the stars?” These imaginings could be used as a springboard into writing, but opportunities for talk and sharing of ideas are essential.
- ★ **Read** non-fiction books about space and space exploration.
- ★ **Read** stories about space.
- ★ **Compose** a collaborative space story. Begin the story and ask each child in turn to add the next sentence.
- ★ **Provide** paper, drawing implements, and collage materials for children to use for creating a space picture.

- ★ **Provide** boxes, tubes, and other loose parts for children to use for constructing space objects.
- ★ **Sing** songs about stars e.g. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Star Light Star Bright, Catch a Falling Star.
- ★ **Write** star shape poems, space haikus, or space acrostic poems. (For information about writing poems, refer to the readlearn resource [Writing Christmas poems](#)).
- ★ **Host** an evening of observing the sky. Invite an astronomer to talk about objects in the night sky or use apps such as Night Sky to identify the objects.
- ★ **Conduct** an internet search for, and view, “images of Earth from space”. Can you find your own county? Discuss.
- ★ **View** [Chris Hadfield](#) performing [Major Tom](#) which he recorded on board the International Space Station.
- ★ **Explore** the [NASA](#) website, particularly the [education tab](#) that has pages for [educators](#) and [students](#), including a [kids club](#). The [earth](#) page explores much of what has been discovered about earth through observations from space.
- ★ **Access** [ABC Splash](#) for some great resources about [Space and our Solar System](#), as well as a digibook about the [Solar system and space exploration](#).
- ★ **Find out** how Indigenous Peoples of Australia use their knowledge of [twinkling stars](#) to understand the changing seasons.
- ★ **Celebrate** with a [Moon Cake](#) and biscuits in the shape of stars or rockets.

